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What You Know Now that You Wish You Knew Then, Part One

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Illuminations

NEWSLETTER FOR NEW FACULTY

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What You Know Now that You Wish You Knew Then, Part One

September 23, 2014



An Interview with Melody Bowdon, FCTL Executive Director

Melody Bowdon might just be one of the busiest and most visible faculty members at UCF. In addition to being a Dept. of Writing and Rhetoric Professor, she has served as Director of UCF's Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (managing a staff of 11) since July 2010. Within her FCTL role she oversees a fall New Faculty Orientation, the Summer and Winter Conferences, course innovation projects, and Adjunct and GTA programs, to name just a few of her FCTL activities!

Additionally, she has published three books and given dozens of conference papers and presentations. How does Melody accomplish so much and make it seem so doable and fun? What strategies for success does she offer new faculty? In a recent interview Melody responded to the following questions.

Interview Conducted by Barbara Tierney, UCF Libraries, Research & Information Services

What things do you wish you'd known when you were new faculty?

- **Availability of student support services on campus:** this includes everything from mental and physical health...to tutoring...to leadership opportunities. I didn't have a sense of all of the places I could send students who were struggling. When I offer a Faculty Learning Community, I always include "UCF Cares" <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/> which provides all kinds of services for students.
- **Time management strategies:** the habits I developed for success in grad school weren't quite the same ones I would need to succeed as a faculty member. Then, when I became an administrator, I had to totally rethink the whole thing to continue producing. I think it's important to remember to be flexible, explore new models for accomplishing goals, and explore strategies for using technology to help you do that, if you're so inclined. I offer workshops for faculty on that.
- **There will always be a lot of opportunities for you, and it's best to try not to get overwhelmed:** you can't do everything, but you should do some things. Work with your chair or other department mentors to figure out appropriate limits and to find activities that will be valuable for you and are appropriate for where you are in your career.
- **Find a network of colleagues outside of your department with whom you can talk, share, spend time, etc:** even though you may feel too busy to participate in workshops and other opportunities, the renewal, connections, and ideas you can gain from them can justify the time investment.

What do you think might be one pitfall for New Faculty?

Isolating yourself. Get out of your office, interact with faculty from other departments and colleges, surround yourself with productive, positive people. Try participating in Faculty Center activities regularly. (The Faculty Center is an organization that involves the whole institution...not just one department or college.)

Did you have a particular New Faculty program that kept you on track?

Participating in the FCTL Summer Conference was the most helpful program to me when I began my career at UCF. I came to this conference in May and began teaching in August. I also was a FCTL Fellow for 2 years before I joined the staff of the Center.

What is a good strategy for succeeding within your academic department?

Talk to your Chair....get advice from your fellow department members...ask for their suggestions about what it takes to succeed in your discipline.

Time management techniques?

Try relying on timers to "chunk out" the time to accomplish prioritized activities; send yourself emails to remind yourself of to-dos.

Try using the "Toodledo (<http://www.toodledo.com/>)" app. Limit the time you spend on your email. Just sit down and do the work.

Any particular books or videos to recommend to New Faculty?

Multipliers: how the best leaders make everyone smarter ([http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/cf.jsp?](http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/cf.jsp?st=CF032031498&ix=pm&I=0&V=D&pm=1)

[st=CF032031498&ix=pm&I=0&V=D&pm=1](http://ucf.catalog.fcla.edu/cf.jsp?st=CF032031498&ix=pm&I=0&V=D&pm=1)), by Liz Wiseman with Greg McKeown. Harper Collins, 2010. It's an exploration of why some leaders ("Diminishers") drain capability and intelligence from their teams, while others ("Multipliers") amplify it to produce better results.

Also, *Tim's Vermeer* (http://www.amazon.com/Tims-Vermeer-Tim-Jenison/dp/B00K31E8NQ/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1411487988&sr=1-1&keywords=Tim%E2%80%99s+Vermeer) [DVD] 2014. Tim Jenison, a Texas-based inventor, attempts to solve one of the greatest mysteries in all art: how did Dutch master Johannes Vermeer manage to paint so photo-realistically 150 years before the invention of photography?

Any final thoughts?

Manage your opportunities... sometimes you may have too many opportunities and you have to be strict with yourself about only picking a manageable number to pursue...so that you are not spread too thin. UCF will still be there next year...and you'll have a chance to try out new things each year.

Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning Web site (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/index.php>);

New Faculty Orientation (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Events/NewFacultyOrientation/>);

New Faculty Resources (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/FacultySuccess/NewFaculty/>);

[Covers: Hiring process; forms you will need to complete; two required orientations; employee numbers; parking; textbooks and desk copies; faculty ID card; meet your librarian; faculty email account; office hours; semester essentials; syllabus information; grading and grade submission; technology tools at UCF; pedagogy ideas/assistance; books on how to teach in our discipline; professional development...Faculty Center consultations; professional development; events at the Faculty Center.]

Adjunct Resources (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/FacultySuccess/Adjuncts/>);

Teaching & Learning Resources (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/>).

[Covers: Classroom management; course design; learning environments; diversity and inclusion; selected pedagogies; teaching books; teaching with technologies; FCTL library of books & other scholarly materials.]